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School Committee Minutes 04-24-2001

ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING

TUESDAY, APRIL 24, 2001

7:30 PM

Present: Joani LaMachia, Chair Suzanne Owayda
David W. McKenna, Vice Chair Paul Schlichtman
Denis J. Sullivan, Secretary Martin J. Thrope
Barbara C. Goodman

Supt. Donovan, Asst. Supt. Gurry, Director of Special Education M. Bisbicos

Call To Order: 7:30PM

Public Participation

None

Secretary's Report

Mr. Sullivan reviewed correspondence

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was

Voted to approve the regular meeting minutes of March 13, 2001. 5-2 Ms. Owayda & Mr. Schlichtman abstain

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was

Voted to approve the regular meeting minutes of March 27, 2001. 5-2 Ms. Owayda & Mr. Schlichtman abstain

Report On AHS Principal Search

Supt. Donovan reported that the questions and scoring have been decided and interviews are beginning this week. When finished with the interviews and the scoring, candidates will be brought forth for the next set of interviews with the Superintendent.

Report From The Finance Committee

Alan Tosti, Chair of the Finance Committee, with Dick Fanning and Mary Margaret addressed the committee relative to the FY2002 budget. Mr. Tosti stated that he tried very hard to give the schools what they wanted. The unexpected high increase in insurance rates (\$1.7 million, the expected increase was \$600,000.00 to \$700,00.00) along with the uncertain amount of money expected from the State in local aid made the schools' request impossible to meet. Mr. Tosti asked members of the School Committee to call their local representatives asking for their support on local aid and also requested that the School Committee support the Finance Committee's budget recommendation of a 5.2% increase (a cut of \$640,000.00).

Supt. Donovan declared that the school department has no choice but to live within the budget approved by the Finance Committee. Mrs. Donovan expressed concerns over the rise in energy costs and its impact on the budget. She also pointed out that the schools work very hard securing grant money and have collected 2.5 million dollars to date. The Superintendent stated that after the Committee has had a chance to review the proposed budget changes, she will recommend that the School Committee accept the bottom line and present a united front at Town Meeting.

Mr. Tosti answered questions from Committee members including one that reassures that money from the Town payroll department would trickle down to the school budget since the school is now overseeing both the payroll for the entire town and school.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded Mr. Schlichtman:

Moved to endorse the recommendation of the Finance Committee for the FY2002 budget in the amount of \$30,828,677.00, a 5.2% increase.

Both Mr. McKenna and Mr. Thrope pointed out that we have not heard the Superintendent's recommended budget changes that the Committee needs to consider proposed changes, and that it can be done without jeopardizing the Town Meeting time table.

Mr. Sullivan withdrew the motion.
Supt. Donovan as well as the School Committee thanked Mr. Tosti and members of the Finance Committee for their presentation.

Budget Review

Mrs. Donovan handed out a budget sheet and presented the suggested budget cuts:

- .. Fund two elementary teachers with \$70,000.00 from Metco Funds
- .. Maintain the \$500.00 program fee for All Day Kindergarten
- .. Eliminate \$15,000.00 slated for athletics
- .. Use \$175,000.00 from the revolving rental account to pay for energy costs
- .. Fund the expansion of the world languages through grants or private funding.

Mr. Thrope requested that the base budget be examined for any potential cuts along with as many choices as possible so that the committee may examine all possibilities. Mrs. Donovan will investigate raising fees in the after school programs and the summer rental programs.

Peirce Field Update

Town Counsel John Maher, along with Attorney Nancy Kaplan, LSP Jeff Nagle, Director of Planning Alan McClenen and Supt. Kay Donovan presented the Committee with an update on Peirce Field Negotiations.

The purpose of the meeting was to brief the new members, advise the Committee of some changes and to review for the presentation/vote at Town Meeting. The Committee viewed a power presentation that outlined:

- .. The Massachusetts Law 21E (applicable law that encompasses, liability, DEP. Mass Contingency Plan)
- .. The history of the site
- .. The remedy/funding
- .. The Town's responsibilities

Mr. Maher stated that even though the site has expanded, the responsible parties are of the opinion that the existing agreement of 7.2 million dollars is realistic. All parties are aware that if the remediation exceeds the \$7.2 million the ultimate dispute resolution mechanism option would kick in.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. McKenna it was:

Voted to reaffirm the vote of the previous committee and to endorse the Peirce Field agreement, fully aware of the new circumstances to also offer our appreciation to the negotiating team. Unanimous

Appointment Of Subcommittees

Ms. LaMachia noted that the new subcommittee appointments were sent in the packet to all members and that she tried to honor everyone's request in filling the different subcommittees. Mr. Thrope stated that as the new chair of the policy and procedure subcommittee his goal is to have the policy manual completed by June and to present the entire book for approval to the Committee. Mr. McKenna stated that he would not be scheduling any subcommittee meetings until after the AHS principal search and Town Meeting are over.

Report on 'Day On The Hill'

Ms. LaMachia, Ms. Owayda, and Mr. Thrope attended Day On The Hill and reported that the day focused on formula funding, MCAS, and education reform. Speakers included Commissioner Driscoll, Senate President Birmingham, and Speaker of the House Finneran.

AHS Accreditation Process

AHS principal, Charlie McCarthy updated the Committee on the accreditation process. He stated that as a member of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges the process is required every 10 years. The school is currently involved in the self-study component of the process that lasts 18-24 months. In November 2002 a visiting team will spend 4 days at AHS interviewing staff, students and school committee members. The results of that visit will be sent to the principal in the spring of 2003.

Vote On Town Of Hampden Request

Supt. Donovan reported that since the last meeting she has been in touch with our representatives and stated that there is not a lot of activity in the House or the Senate on the proposed bill. However, Rep. Marzilli did not believe that it would affect existing school construction projects.

The motion postponed from the last meeting was voted.

Motion by Mr. Thrope and seconded by Mr. Sullivan:

Voted that the Arlington School Committee express its support requested by the Town of Hampden on increased funding on Category III, school reconstruction projects; that the Committee write to Senator Antonioni and Representative Larkin along with our own local representatives expressing our position.

Mr. Schlichtman requested that the letter emphasize that judgment in identifying the source of funding be used.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. McKenna it was

Voted to move the 11:00 rule for 15 minutes. 6-1 Ms. Goodman voted no

New Business

- .. The Rotary Breakfast will be held on Wednesday, April 25th from 7:30-9:00.
- .. The AEEF Spelling Bee will be held on Thursday, April 26 @ the Town Hall

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. McKenna it was

Voted to enter executive session for the purpose of negotiations with no further business to be conducted upon return to open session except to adjourn. RC: Unanimous

Executive session 11:05 –

Motion to adjourn @